

SUPERIOR COAL MINES
Old Superior Mines and Townsite
Sections 28, 29, T21N, R102W, Horse
Thief Canyon, about 1/4 mile north
of South Superior
South Superior vicinity
Sweetwater County
Wyoming

HAER No. WY-51

HAER
WYO
19-SOSUP.V,
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: Superior Coal Mines
Sections 28, 29
T21N, R102W
Horse Thief Canyon
Old Superior Mines and Townsite
about 1/4 mile north of South
Superior < South Superior Vicinity
Sweetwater County
Wyoming

USGS Quad: Superior, 7.5'

UTM: See structural descriptions

Date of Construction: ca. 1903-1953

Present Owner: Multiple public and private ownership

Significance: The Superior mines represent a unique adaption to geological, economic and political conditions. Due to the distance between the mines and the hilly terrain, small camps developed adjacent to specific mines. These communities coalesced into either the Union Pacific Coal Company town of Superior or the independent town of South Superior, depending upon whether the community was located on lands granted the Union Pacific Railroad or on lands reserved to the public. The two towns maintained an uneasy but necessary relationship through the twentieth century until the mines closed in the 1960s. The town of Superior was dismantled or demolished, but South Superior continues to be occupied.

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II. HISTORY

In 1868 coal mining was one of the industries that drew people to the previously unsettled areas of what would become Wyoming. Beginning in 1868 when the first steam engine began to climb the Continental Divide of the Wyoming Rockies, coal was regarded as one of the most valuable assets of the area. Towns developed wherever deposits of bituminous coal and the means of transportation coincided. Throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, towns were abandoned and buildings removed for use elsewhere.

The towns of Superior and South Superior came into existence as a result of coal mining development along Horse Thief Canyon. The two communities' economies revolved around coal mining. When the coal mines closed in the 1950s and early 1960s the fact the area's economy was based on a single resource became all too apparent. From an all-time high of 900 people, the population of South Superior plummeted to 197 persons in 1970. The nearby community of Superior had 1676 residents in 1925 and no one lived there in 1970. With the closing of the mines, all residential, commercial, and mine-related buildings on lands owned by Union Pacific were demolished or sold and moved away. The company town of Superior ceased to exist and its residents moved away. South Superior continued to exist at a much reduced level. The growth and demise of these two coal towns created a unique cultural landscape that had its beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Geography has had a major influence in determining the layout of Superior and South Superior towns. These communities are located near the head of Horse Thief Draw. Horse Thief Draw is a north to south trending tributary of Bitter Creek. The source of Horse Thief Draw is north and west of present day Superior so that at its upper reaches the stream flows southeastward. At the location of South Superior the stream turns south and flows some 10 miles to reach Bitter Creek. Throughout its length the stream has cut a deep, steep-sided valley. Tributary streams flowing into Horse Thief Draw have also cut steep-sided valleys and it is in these valleys that the Superior Coal mines are located. The most prominent tributary drainage in the upper reaches of Horse Thief Draw is known as B Canyon. This drainage flows eastward into Horse Thief Draw along the west end of South Superior. Between Horse Thief Draw and B Canyon is a large flat-topped interfluvial ridge approximately 100 feet high and between 1500 and 3000 feet wide. It is upon this ridge that the Union Pacific Company town of Superior was located. South Superior, the independent town, was located on the valley floor immediately east of this ridge.

The Superior Coal mines were located along the valley of Horse Thief Draw or in side canyons near to Horse Thief Draw. The distance from A mine, the southern and easternmost, to the D. O. Clark Mine at the western end of the Superior Mining District is

approximately 3 miles by road. Due to the distances between the mines, small coal camps which housed the miners working in a particular mine grew up around that mine.

The southernmost mine at Superior was the Union Pacific A mine. The A mine portals were located in a side canyon east of Horse Thief Draw and south of the existing town of South Superior. A small neighborhood of Japanese coal miners was located at the mouth of the canyon in which A mine was located. This small collection of houses was known at that time as the "Jap Town". This area became the primary residential center for Japanese workers during the early years of the Superior Mines. A neighborhood of Euro-American miners also was located in and around A Canyon and was known as A Camp.

North and west of A Mine is the Union Pacific Coal Company B Mine. The portals of B Mine are located along B Canyon immediately west of South Superior. Two residential localities are found in close proximity to the B Mine. These areas are referred to as B Hill and B Two Hill. Both are located atop the interfluvial ridge which separates B Canyon from Horse Thief Draw. The B Hill community is the easternmost, being located at the east end of the ridge. The B Two Hill community is located on the same ridge immediately to the west of the B Hill community.

The remaining Union Pacific Coal Company mines were located along the valley of Horse Thief Draw. The E Mine portal was located immediately north of the B Two Hill community. Because of the proximity of E Mine to B Hill, B Two Hill and C Hill, no E Camp was necessary. Miners could live on C Hill or B Hill and still work in E Mine.

North and west of E Mine was the Union Pacific Coal Company C Mine. The C Mine was located along the north flank of Horse Thief Draw. The residential community of C Hill was located directly south of the mine on the ridge which separates Horse Thief Draw from B Canyon. The C Hill community is separated from B Hill and B Two Hill by a southwest to northeast trending tributary drainage which intersects Horse Thief Draw near E Mine. The C Hill community is oriented in a westerly to easterly direction and is bounded on the north side by the section line dividing Sections 20 and 29. Section 29 was acquired by Union Pacific as a result of the land grant to the railroad made prior to construction in the late 1860s.

The final Union Pacific Coal Company Mines, the D Mine, and the D. O. Clark Mine are located west of C Mine. The D Mine is located along the north slope of Horse Thief Draw. The D. O. Clark Mine was located along the bottom of Horse Thief Draw a short distance to the southwest of D Mine. D Camp was located on the south side of Horse Thief Draw northwest of C Hill and the independent Premier Camp.

The company town of Superior consisted of the communities of A Camp and the associated Japanese Camp, B Hill, B Two Hill, C Hill, and D Camp as well as the Union Pacific Coal Mines, A Mine,

B Mine, C Mine, and D Mine, and D.O. Clark Mine. Because of the nature of the checkerboard land grant corridor within which Superior and South Superior were located, lands not controlled by Union Pacific were present. It was on lands not controlled by Union Pacific that the town of South Superior and the Copenhagen and Premier Mines were located. The Copenhagen Mine is located directly north of South Superior on a north to south trending tributary drainage. The Premier Mine is located between C Mine and D Mine on the north side of Horse Thief Draw. Premier Camp, associated with the Premier Mine is located south of Horse Thief Draw between the drainage and the community of C Hill.

When construction of housing and support facilities at Superior began is not precisely known. Probably as early as 1903, when the first coal prospect was made at C Mine, was the year that structures began to appear near the future site of Superior. By 1907 the townsite of Superior began to emerge. Early construction activity centered around what was called A Mine, B Mine, and C Mine. By 1909, C Hill had a number of residential structures. Growth continued and by 1915 there were 1382 individuals in Superior. That number had increased to 1676 in 1925.²

The historic town of Superior, a company town, was built by Superior Coal, a subsidiary of Union Pacific. While the company mining camps were being built, two privately owned communities were also established in the vicinity. The first was called Dog Town, which was located adjacent to B Mine in B Canyon and Horse Thief Draw. Dog Town, which was located just east of South Superior, later became part of that community. Initially called White City, South Superior became the commercial center of the area. Since the town was independently owned and operated, when the mines closed the residents remained at South Superior. All of the villages and communities in this area are often lumped together and called Superior. In actuality, only the Union Pacific-run community in the NE1/4 of Section 29 and W1/2 of the NW1/4 of Section 28, T21N, R102W, is where the townsite of Superior is located (48SW4068).

After Union Pacific Coal Company took over Superior Coal Company in 1916, the town experienced rapid growth. By 1922 there were over 217 residential structures at the camp. In addition, the community boasted a bank, opera house, hospital, and several schools. Also evident were the ever-present company store, mine office, and superintendent's house. Several industrial support facilities existed in town, but the majority were located along the northern edge of town. These facilities included the boiler house, machine shop, boilermaker shop, fan house, hay shed, stables, water wells, and tipple. Besides the more permanent structures, the majority of the homes had several outbuildings. The most common outbuilding was the outhouse, but chicken coops, rabbit hutches, and coal sheds were also prevalent.

Horse Thief Canyon, where the Superior mines were located, is situated in a semi-arid region. Paradoxically, one of the biggest problems facing the miners was the overabundance of water. The

Superior mines penetrated an aquifer and the coal mines had to be dewatered. Water wells, which were actually placed along Horse Thief Creek to dewater the mines, were essential in keeping the underground operations running smoothly. From the beginning, water inside the mines would be a problem.

Dewatering the mines resulted in large volumes of water being dumped into the nearby Horse Thief drainage. Since Horse Thief Creek was essentially a perennial drainage it did not have the carrying capacity to handle the additional water from the mines. Downcutting quickly took place and the drainage became deeply incised. With increased mining activity, more water was pumped from below ground. Added to this was periodic heavy runoff. Once downcutting penetrated the soft alluvial fill of the canyon, bedrock impeded the further downward entrenching of the drainage. As the stream encountered these bedrock nick points the drainage began to cut laterally. As a result, sidecutting threatened structures built along the creek banks. This sidecutting had long-term impacts on building localities and the development of the area.

The growth and development of the Superior area created a cultural landscape scarred by mining and marked by ethnic vernacular construction. Italian and Greek stone masons, for instance, built homes, stores, and outdoor ovens from stone. These craftsmen created a unique landscape that is still evident.

One undated account of Superior recorded in "The American Guide" provides some insight into the town's origins and ethnic diversity.

Growth and development in the Superior district is directly attributable to the coal mining industry. From the time the first mines were developed in this district, the town rapidly grew into prominence as an important mining town and with the construction of a branch from the Union Pacific main line new mining concerns have located along the canyon and have begun operations.

To increase its industrial means of coal mining this town drew a conglomeration of racial groups. Here a number of different nationalities are working and living congenially. The basic characteristics and cultural heritages of each nationality are engendered by hard living conditions of the Old World and is conducive to habits of industry, frugality, and contentment with the new conditions.

Relationship of these racial groups to community development is best shown by the tendency for the various groups to contribute to the community the best habits and characteristics of their cultural heritages thereby adding to the general welfare. Contemporary racial groups retaining their ethnic identity are Japanese, Chinese, Negro, and to a lesser degree Mexican. Other groups intermarry freely and are fast losing their ethnic identity."

Among the various nationalities to migrate to Superior were the Italians, Yugoslavians, Austrians, Scots, and Greeks, to name but a few.

The variety of people living and working in Superior led to various churches being established in the town. The largest churches were Episcopal, Catholic, and Mormon. These congregations met in the meeting hall at Superior, and later a Catholic church was constructed near South Superior to accommodate the worshippers.

Water and the Growth of Superior

The growing town of Superior and the surrounding area needed a dependable water supply to insure growth. The water system was originally designed to serve Superior and the other coal camps. South Superior, which was privately owned, was not intended to be the beneficiary of this service. Nonetheless, water lines were eventually run to South Superior and the town was tied into the Union Pacific water system. When the mining camps were abandoned, the water lines were left in place. In a piecemeal fashion, the water lines were shut off to the various abandoned mining camps. The abandoned water system is still evident. The existing water lines serve to remind the residents of Horse Thief Canyon that the town owed its existence to coal mining.

When Superior was built, there was a problem obtaining drinking water. Various methods were tried to overcome this shortage. Among the more unique was the use of water from the mines. According to one account, this water came out of the mine "murky and inky" and was allowed to settle. It was several days before it was used. "Each family had several barrels used for water shortage. When girls wanted to wash their hair, they would go to the machine shop and get water that came from the steam pipes." Later, water was hauled by Union Pacific in railroad tank cars from Point of Rocks. This water was expensive, and people "preferred to carry their water from South Superior in five-gallon buckets."

To alleviate the water shortage, a water system for Superior was built during World War I. More than likely it was at this time that the Superior water towers were first constructed. A 1909 photo of Superior does not show any water towers. Yet another photograph taken later in 1909 clearly shows three water towers adjacent to the town. A fourth water tower was constructed at a later date.

The addition of wells, water towers, cisterns, and an underground water system greatly improved the town's waterworks. Although this system was not totally satisfactory, it facilitated obtaining drinking water for at least most of the residents in the area.

A 1925 insurance map for Union Pacific property clearly shows the water system in place at Superior. The map was revised in 1948 and included the "War Housing Project" on C Hill. The war housing project consisted of a group of 17 dormitory like buildings built to alleviate the housing shortage created by World War II. Many Superior residents entered the armed services leaving family members

at home. Additional housing was needed for replacement workers who came to mine coal during the war. Interestingly, while the Union Pacific water lines provided water to their own housing, the map shows no tie-in to South Superior. The water system was designed to serve the now abandoned coal camps at Superior, B Hill, C Hill, D Mine, and D. O. Clark. The War Housing Project was connected with the water system after its construction during World War II. If South Superior wanted running water, it was forced to tie into the Union Pacific system. Developing its own water system was out of the question for both financial and logistical reasons. The logistics of establishing their own water system meant crossing Union Pacific land to a water source, something not easily accomplished.

Historically, a variety of structures were constructed at Superior. They were indicative of the services needed to accommodate the large population of a company town. The size and ethnic variability present at Superior dictated, to a large extent, the diversity of structures required to house a variety of services. Unfortunately when the town was abandoned in the 1960s, most of the structures were dismantled or moved away. The majority of these structures were wood, and were easily moved to other localities, such as Rock Springs. Simply moving out the homes was the preferable method of dismantling the town. However, moving out buildings was only part of the dismantling process.

In the 1950s Union Pacific began slowly closing down its coal mining operations at Superior. Much of Superior's coal had been used for the Union Pacific Railroad's steam locomotives. In the 1950s these locomotives were being replaced. The resulting decline in the demand for coal led to the closure of the Superior Mines. When the D. O. Clark mine closed in 1963, the process of closing coal mines was complete. Since Superior, D Hill, C Hill, and the structures around A Mine were all owned by Union Pacific, Union Pacific was faced with tough decisions. Unlike previously abandoned coal camps at Superior there was privately owned property juxtapositioned in the middle of company land. To avoid paying property taxes and to prevent the homes at their camps from falling into disrepair, the houses and structures were either dismantled or moved. Removing these homes also meant pulling out utilities and shutting off water. With the town of South Superior nearby, Union Pacific was forced to continue at least minimal services to the private homes and businesses. In addition, there were private homes near Premier. Instead of being able to shut down the water and electric services, Union Pacific had to maintain portions of water lines until they could make different arrangements. In the meantime they shut down laterals serving Superior, C Hill, D Hill, and D. O. Clark. Shutting down the laterals meant closing valves or plugging the tee at the mine. Union Pacific could not afford investing in removing the lines and since services had to be continued to Premier, it was not feasible to even consider pulling out the pipe. Unfortunately, plugging pipes and shutting valves were a temporary

answer but became a long term solution. Problems growing out of partially shutting down the water system would continue for decades.

The Opening of the Mines

C Mine was the first mine opened by the Superior Coal Company. "On October 23, 1903, the drift into C Mine was started, and on February 24, 1906, the slope was begun." By 1907 the townsite of Superior and C Camp had been constructed south of the mine. As early as 1913 the mine was producing 1200 tons of coal daily and employing 180 men."

C Mine was one of the more productive mines at Superior. In 1916 when ownership of the mine was transferred to the Union Pacific Coal Company, it was claimed that the "mine has been a large producer and is now turning out about 1,100 tons per day with about 175 men being employed." Although electricity was used in hauling the coal to the surface, the empty cars in the mine rooms were snubbed by horses and mules." The 1920 State Coal Mine Inspector's Report describes the haulage system and the mine in more detail.

"C" Mine--Is on the No. 1 seam, which measures 7 to 8 1/2 feet in thickness. Mostly all mining is worked on the panel system. Electric hoists are placed at the top of each plane, the coal being lowered to the entries from whence it is hauled to slope partings by locomotives. The haulage on the main slope is performed by a 300 H.P.A.C. Hoist. Ventilation is produced by a fan."

In addition to the electric haulage system, the mine also employed electrical mining machinery, such as rotary drills and crushers.

By 1922 C Mine had become fairly extensive. At the main opening, a blacksmith shop, fan house, hoist house, three powder houses, and a box car loader house were evident. At the manway opening along the Section 21 and Section 28 common line, a storage shed, powder houses, a stable, a hay shed, and a blacksmith shop were noted. In 1925 a tile bath house was installed at C Mine."

The State Mine Inspector's Report lists no production for C Mine after 1941. By 1941 the coal was too deep to effectively haul, and most of the miners were transferred to D. O. Clark." Prior to closure, the coal cars had to be transferred three times to get the coal to the surface. The expense of hauling the coal coupled with the inability to ventilate the mine that deep made extracting the coal too expensive."

B Mine opened in 1906, and by 1907 residential structures to serve the camp had been constructed about a quarter of a mile north of the mine. B Mine was opened on No. 7 Seam. By 1909 the mine had the capacity of producing "eight hundred and fifty tons per day." The mine was relatively modern by early twentieth century standards and used electric mining machinery for drilling, cutting, and hauling the coal. To improve production, in 1911 an experiment in new mining methods was attempted at the mine. Superior Coal

attempted hydraulic mining and the use of various powders to gauge the effect of shattering by blasting. Both experiments failed due to costly operation and shattered coal."

During 1913, the mine was expanded and an additional slope opened at the mine. In describing the mine in 1913, the State Coal Mine Inspector's Report states:

"B" Mine, No. 7 Seam--

This seam is six feet six inches in thickness, with a pitch of eight per cent, and is worked on the room and pillar system. Electric haulage is employed on all entries and on the plane. The mine is ventilated by a 45-horse power electric Sturtevant fan, with a volume capacity of 40,000 cubic feet of air per minute. Springling lines are laid throughout the workings, by which all places are kept in a damp condition. The mine produces 1,000 tons daily, with 150 men employed.

"B"--Rock--Slope--

A slope is now being driven from the entrance to No. 1 Seam to what is known as the Van Dyke Seam. With a distance of 1,000 feet to be driven through rock to reach the seam, about 600 feet is completed and the opening is expected to be producing coal by April or May, 1914."

In 1916 the B Mine was combined with E Mine. This change is described as follows:

"E" Mine--What was formerly known as "B" Mine has been consolidated with "E" Mine and the coal from both properties is brought to the surface through a shaft 110 feet in depth, located near the main power house of the Company. Former "B" Mine, now known as Upper "E", is about finished, being on the retreat with 20 men employed and producing about 150 tons daily. This was formerly one of the largest producers in the camp, but has now seen its best days. Lower "E" Mine is developed by a slope with entries north and south, the room and pillar system being the same as at the other mines. The seam being worked is No. 7 Seam of the Rock Springs series and is seven feet in thickness. The mine has a capacity of 1,000 tons per day, but on account of the scarcity of labor is producing but little over one-half at the present time. Electric motors are used in all main haulage ways, mules and horses for snubbing. Most of the coal is cut by machines.

On account of the tender roof in this mine a somewhat different system is used than in the other mines, cribs being set alongside the room tracks, the roof on the gob side of the cribs being allowed to cave. A 200 h.p. electric hoist, situated underground, draws the coal up

the slope when it is back switched to the foot of the shaft. A 300 h.p. electric hoist operated self-dumping cages on which the cars are hoisted to the surface and dumped. A peculiar feature of this hoist is that it is situated on top of the steel headframe which is about 80 feet in height. This hoist is operated by an engineer stationed in the weigh room.¹⁸

These changes correspond to Union Pacific Coal Company's takeover of Superior Coal Company in 1916.

In 1918 coal was again extracted from B Mine. This coal was extracted from the Van Dyke Seam. Apparently its workings consisted of a rock slope that was 700 ft long at a pitch of 15 - degrees. These workings are the ones referred to as the "B-RockSlope" in the 1913 State Coal Mine Inspector's Report. In addition to this reopened seam, coal was still extracted from No. 7 Seam via E Mine. The E Mine and the old B Mine, which was on No. 7 Seam, were "connected by a plane and the remaining coal in the [old] B Mine. . . taken out through E Mine."¹⁹

The mines at Superior were operated by electricity from their inception. Often manual mining methods were employed along with the use of horses and mules, but electric hoists, cutting machines, and some of the haulage equipment were always electrical at Superior coal mines and later the Union Pacific Coal mines. It was a point of pride to Superior that their mines were operated by electricity. The following 1918 description of the electrical facilities boasts:

The mines at Superior are electrically operated, receiving their power from the central station, containing four alternating current and two direct current Curtiss Steam Turbines, with a total capacity of 1800 K.W. These are housed in a handsome concrete building, located near the E shaft mine.²⁰

This description also points out that E Mine was becoming the focus of Union Pacific's development during World War I.

By 1921 B Mine, meaning the workings associated with coal extraction from the Van Dyke Seam, was producing 1100 and 1200 tons of coal a day.²¹ The mine continued to produce coal at this rate until 1923 when production decreased to 900 tons a day. Interestingly, even though coal was hauled to the surface via electrical hoists, mules were still employed underground to haul the coal to the hoist line.²² Production continued to drop, and in 1927, the mine only worked 182 days and produced 800 tons per day.²³

In 1929 production from B Mine increased dramatically. The mine operated 280 days with a capacity of 1000 tons daily.²⁴ Production continued at approximately this rate until 1931 when the mine operated just 180 days.²⁵ This decreased to 124 days in 1932.

In 1934 the trend of diminishing production reversed and increased to 175 days. This climbed to 208 days in 1935.²⁶ After this, mine operations stabilized at B Mine, with the mine staying open over 200 days a year until 1938. In 1938 the mine operated only 145 days and closed the following year. The History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines attributes this closure "to the complete exhaustion of workable coal."²⁷

D Mine was opened June 30, 1906, by the Superior Coal Company. In the State Coal Mine Inspector's Report for 1909, a description of the facilities was given.

D Mine has an eight hundred ton output and at the present time is ventilated by a furnace, which is giving very good satisfaction. There has been installed one electric locomotive and electric haulage plant, and one motor barn. The tibble has been altered and the outside landings show a considerable amount of work which is a great improvement.²⁸

The mine was using automation at a relatively early date. By 1913 it was claimed that all the mines "operated by electricity throughout, a central power plant supplying the whole camp."²⁹ However, in the D Mine, horses and mules were used in haulage, while electric locomotives were used on the main haulways. In addition to this, electric mining machines were used throughout the mine, for both cutting rooms and development work. Production had increased to such a point that in 1913, 156 men were employed in D Mine.³⁰

On May 1, 1916, the Superior Coal Company merged with the Union Pacific Coal Company.³¹ Details of the mine operation after 1916 give some key insights into the type of mining taking place at the mine. A 1918 description of D Mine states:

This mine is opened on the No. 1 seam, which here had an average thickness of eight feet. It is developed by a slope, and north and south entries, of which eleven have been opened on each side, and the slope is advancing for the purpose of uncovering the 12th level. This mine has a capacity of about 1200 tons daily, under normal conditions, but owing to the shortage of labor the present output averages only 700 tons with about 100 men employed. An electrically driven Sturtevant fan of 60000 cubic feet capacity furnishes the ventilation. All workings above the sixth level are finished and the output is from below that point. About 39% of the output is mined by machines, the balance by pick miners in pillar work. The method of mining is the room and pillar system.³²

The shortage of labor mentioned in this description could be attributable to the fact that America was involved in World War I

and a large portion of the manpower had been funneled into war industries and military service.

The D Mine operated for various periods from 1906 to the 1950s. From 1906 to 1927 the mine operated continuously, then in 1927 the mine closed "on account of lack of market." In 1937 the mine reopened and continued to operate until 1944. The mine remained closed until December 1947 when it reopened for the last time. The mine was closed for the final time in the early 1950s.

In 1938 the D. O. Clark Mine was opened near the D Mine. A 1937 article from the employee publication of the Union Pacific states:

The D. O. Clark Mine will produce coal at the rate of one million tons annually for thirty-five years, representing, as it does, the largest body of coal allocated to one mine in the western portion of the United States, and the new property definitely fixes the town of Superior in its present location."

The History of the Union Pacific Coal Company fixes the location of this mine as "northwest of the present D Mine slope entrance." In other words, the mine opening for the D. O. Clark Mine was over the hill from the portal to D Mine but due south of D Mine's hoist house, water tank, and old gas producing plant.

When the D. O. Clark Mine was opened, great production totals were projected. Union Pacific Coal Company bragged, "the new mine is modern in every respect" and with the "great coal reserve accessible to the D. O. Clark Mine . . . production should be going forward well into the twenty-first century." D. O. Clark fell far short of this prediction, and by 1962 the mine was closed. On December 20, 1962, the Union Pacific Coal Company was dissolved."

In 1918 a mine not owned by Union Pacific Coal Company opened near D Mine. Called Premier Mine, this was one of the largest privately owned mines in the area. The relationship between D Mine and Premier Mine in 1918 must have been congenial because they purchased electrical power from Union Pacific when they first opened. The State Coal Mine Inspector's Report for 1918 gives the following information about the mine operation at Premier.

[The] mine at present is ventilated by a furnace. Preparations are being made to install a fan. Steam is used for hoisting, pumping and screening. Power is being purchased from an adjoining property to operate one machine which has lately been placed on the property. It is the intention that a unit of size enough to furnish all power necessary with the exception of hoisting will be installed before spring and that two more mining machines will be operating at that time. The property was opened this year and is really at this time coming out of a state of development and on the last day of September the output

had reached the five hundred ton mark and it is doubtful if it will be forced much over that. The Company has erected eight dwellings on the property for employees as well as several two room bathhouses and bunkhouses. The numbers of all these will be increased as fast as they are able to get material and labor."

The residential structures mentioned in this report could not be identified in the field. Residential structures for D Mine were already present northeast of where the Premier Mine portal was opened. These structures were called D Camp on the 1907 General Map of Superior.

By 1920 the Premier Coal Company had expanded operations. During 1920, the State Mine Inspector reported, "a suitable and up-to-date wash house has been erected; also a large hotel, with furnished bedrooms on the top floor, dining room on the middle floor, and an amusement hall in the basement.""" The only Superior structure recorded during our survey that appears to be large enough to house an amusement hall in the basement would be Structure K, which also had a number of domestic artifacts in the dump to the east.

In 1922 additional improvement for the workers at the Premier Mine were made. During 1922, "three 3-roomed dwellings, one 50 feet x 20 feet bunk house . . . an old boiler house remodeled and converted into a machine shop and blacksmith shop, and complete installation of a loading boom" were constructed near the mine." These services provided by Premier Coal duplicated those already provided by Union Pacific at Superior and the D Mine Camp. This duplication was necessitated by Union Pacific Coal Company's policy of company-owned boardinghouses, bunkhouses, and family residences. It does appear that, at least in 1922, both D Camp and Premier Mine were serviced by one school.

Possibly to pay for the improvement made in 1922, Premier Coal mortgaged their holdings in April of 1922 for \$10,000."" The mortgage was granted by the Colorado National Bank of Denver and had a long-term effect on Premier Coal. For the coal industry in Wyoming, the Great Depression arrived in the 1920s."" Because of the depressed coal market, D Mine did not operate between 1927 and 1937. Premier Mine went into receivership in April of 1932. The property was "then purchased from the receiver by Rock Springs Fuel Company in August 1932.""

The property was sold to Rock Springs Fuel Company for \$10,000."" The list of items sold under this transfer provides an insight into the type of buildings and equipment used at the Premier Mine. As a result of the sale, Rock Springs Fuel obtained

all the stands, tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances, all leases and leasehold properties, all contracts and options for the purchase and acquisition of lands and leases, all coal and other mining rights and property, all

buildings, structures and fixtures, all coal mining plants, machinery, equipment and appliances, all hoisting engines, boilers, pumps, cars, tramways, fans, loading machines, scales, tools and implements, all water rights, tramways, railroads, licenses, easements, contracts, leases, franchises, and all other property, real personal and mixed, now belonging to the defendant [i.e., Premier Coal]."

The deed goes on to specify that Rock Springs Fuel has the right to "mine the said reserved coal veins without liability for damage from subsidence of the surface or the strata underlying the surface resulting from the mining or removal of coal." In essence, Rock Springs Fuel denied responsibility for subsidence resulting from their mining venture. According to the State Coal Mine Inspector's Report, Rock Springs Fuel did not begin extracting coal from the Premier Mine until 1941. The mine was closed for the last time in the 1950s.

D Mine, which opened in 1906, was initially operated by the Superior Coal Company. Superior Coal obtained the right to mine the coal from the United States via a patent first filed for December 30, 1905, and recorded January 20, 1909." In September of 1913, Superior Coal granted all but the NE1/4 of Section 20 to Union Pacific Railroad Company in the form of a right-of-way but retained the mineral rights." Then in March of 1920, Superior Coal sold 46 acres in the NW1/4 of the SW1/4 of Section 20 to Premier Coal Company for \$1,380."

According to the History of the Union Pacific Coal Company, mining at D Mine by Union Pacific began in 1916." By 1922 extensive development had taken place in the NW1/4 of Section 20 and the canyon to the west. A railspur, tippie, car loader, blacksmith shop, barn, air shaft, and office building had been constructed in the SW1/4 NW1/4 of Section 20. In addition, residential structures and a schoolhouse were built southwest of the mine to house the employees and provide schooling for the miners' children.

D Mine operated continuously until 1927, when it was closed due to a poor coal market. The mine remained closed until 1937, when it reopened to provide more coal. It remained open throughout most of World War II but again closed in 1944 and remained shut down for three years. The mine resumed operation in 1947 and closed for the last time in the 1950s."

Several smaller operations began in the area in the early twentieth century. According to the Sweetwater County Clerk's Records, the NE1/4 of Section 28 was sold to Dyer O. Clark in 1903 for \$3,450." In September of 1906, Dyer O. Clark purchased the NW1/4 of the Section for \$13,000." Then in January of 1909, he sold his properties to Superior Coal for an unspecified amount." It is interesting to note that Dyer O. Clark served as superintendent of Union Pacific Coal Mines from 1895 to 1904 and as vice-president and general manager from 1904 to 1911." When

Superior Coal sold their holdings to Union Pacific Coal Company in 1916, their property in Section 28 was included in the transaction. Superior Coal did, however, retain the coal rights." At about the same time Union Pacific gained control of this property, a man named Stephen Sharp filed for the surface rights on the unclaimed portions of the NE1/4. He received a patent on August 8, 1922." Carl Johnson later filed for the coal rights in the NE1/4NW1/4NE1/4 of the section and, on the same day as Sharp, obtained the patent from the United States." Coincidentally, on August 8, 1922, Sharp sold the surface rights for \$15,000 and Johnson sold the coal rights for \$26,000 to Rock Springs Fuel Company." Rock Springs Fuel and Union Pacific Coal Company jointly operated in the N1/2 of Section 28 in the years following 1922.

Portals and support structures for Union Pacific's C Mine were located in the NW1/4 of Section 28. There is, however, a small amount of confusion associated with the mining activities in this area. The 1907 General Map of Superior shows tailings from E Mine extending into the NW1/4 of the section. By 1922 this had changed, and a portal for C Mine is shown in approximately the same location. Possibly as early as 1922, C Mine was extensive enough to extend into Section 28. By 1930 a bathhouse was located in this vicinity along with a hay barn and blacksmith shop." Union Pacific Coal Company's facilities in the N1/2 of Section 28 were never as extensive as those operated by Rock Springs Fuel Company.

Based on the 1958 USGS map for the Superior Quadrangle, another mine is represented in the vicinity of Rock Springs Fuel Company's mine. On the USGS map it is referred to as G Mine and the hill behind the mine is referred to as G Hill, but there is no reference to this in the State Coal Mine Inspector's Report. Moreover, miners who worked in C Mine" and residents of Superior do not recall a G Mine." There is a mine portal shown on the 1922 General Map of Superior just north of the Section 28 section line, but this portal is not given a name. Possibly G Mine was linked with C Mine and never was developed extensively due to the proximity of the Union Pacific property.

Rock Springs Fuel Company began extracting coal from their No. 1 Mine in 1918. It was not until 1920, however, that extensive improvements were made. The State Coal Mine Inspector's Report for the year states:

No. 1 Mine, Superior, belonging to the Rock Springs Fuel Company, is situated close to the town of Superior. The opening consists of a slope driven on the pitch of the vein. The seam is about 9 feet thick. Entries are driven at right angles to the slope. Horses are used to haul the coal from the miners to the slope, from whence it is taken to the tipple by a steam driven hoist. All coal is undermined, two mining machines being used for that purpose. The mine is in the early stages of development, although 600 tons have been produced some days under

limited conditions. Many changes are being made with a view of still increasing the production. A small electrical plant produces the power to operate mining machines and drills.

The following improvements have been made during the year 1920: Installation of one 150 H.P. Steam Hoist; one 6-ft. Reversible Soroco Fan and Steel Housing; two new Improved Short Wall Sullivan Mining Machines; one 30 H.P. Electric Hoist for inside; one ten-shower Bath House and changing room; nine dwelling houses; one Boarding House, all with running water and electric lights installed, and a 30-ft. addition to the barn."

Additional changes, as recorded by the State Coal Mine Inspector, were minimal after 1922 until the 1930s, when Rock Springs Fuel made \$26,808 worth of improvements. The most noteworthy change was the opening of the No. 3 Mine. No. 3 Mine would continue operation until the 1950s. In addition to opening the new mine, a portable fan and a new fan house were constructed." These new improvements insured Rock Springs Fuel could operate even after the coal in the No. 1 Mine was extracted.

In 1937 the mine operations centering around Rock Springs Fuel Company's No. 1 and No. 3 mines at Superior appear as the Copenhagen Mine in the State Coal Mine Inspector's Report." Mr. John Lucas, whose father opened, owned, and operated the Rock Springs Fuel Company mines, holds that the land was originally homesteaded by people of Swedish descent. Apparently these homesteaders

had a liking for chewing tobacco, which was held in what the 'Swedes' called a snoose box. When the mine went into operation, the camp was called Snoose Camp after the miners who were Swedish and the type of chewing tobacco containers they used. The name was later modernized to Copenhagen, taking the name of a specific brand of tobacco used by the miners."

A majority of miners chewed tobacco during the period, as smoking was not permitted in the mines.

Like most coal companies in Sweetwater County, the Copenhagen Mine and Rock Springs Fuel Company's Superior operations greatly increased production through World War II. Production peaked in 1942, when their Superior mines produced 144,945 tons of coal." The period marked by World War II witnessed the highest production levels in the history of the Copenhagen Mine. By the early 1950s the mine had ceased operation due to the decline in the market for coal brought about by the retirement of railroad steam locomotives in the west.

Superior was a company town from its inception. From the beginning Superior was divided into five localities. Specifically, the main part of Superior was located on the interfluvial ridge

separating Horse Thief Draw and B Canyon in the NW1/4 of Section 28, and the NE1/4 NE1/4 of Section 29, T21N, R102W. Local residents would often separate these areas by calling the locality in Section 29 "B Two" and the eastern locality in Section 28 "B Hill". A third locality sat north of B Two and straddled the common line between Sections 20 and 29. This northernmost locality, which fell on the section line, was called C Hill because of its proximity to C Mine. The fourth locality, D Camp was located further west in Section 19, T21N, R100W, but was separated from B, B Two and C Hills by the independent Premier Camp in Section 20. The A Camp, the fifth community to comprise the company town of Superior was separated from B Hill by the town of South Superior. For the sake of consistency in our discussion, the three localities at Superior which will be affected by reclamation activities will be described using their vernacular names of B Hill (eastern locality), B Two (west central locality), and C Hill (northern locality).

Each locality at Superior had distinctive structures that helped set them apart from the other areas. This distinction was more functional than architectural, but variations in the architecture occur due to the specialization of activities at each locality. The Union Pacific Company store, mine office, and mine superintendent's house were located at B Hill. Also present at B Hill were the bank, opera house, and meeting house. B Two is where the schoolhouses were found. At C Hill, at last one privately owned venture was established. Specifically, a candy store or confectionery was located at C Hill.

The most unique and most intact structure recorded at Superior is the candy store at C Hill. The store was owned and built by a man named Gus Thomas, a native of Greece. He built the structure from locally available sandstone after working in the mines during the day. The sandstone was hand shaped. The southeast corner of the building was carved with the Greek letters PO O I and . . . O. . . . K H E. This store was very popular among the Superior residents, and the proprietor was affectionately called Ole Kaphootie. The store was finished in 1935 and served the community until the early 1960s."

The candy store consisted of three floors--a basement, a ground floor, and a second story. Originally the basement contained the furnace, the ground floor served as the candy store, and the second story occasionally served as a boardinghouse. At least during World War II when there was a shortage of housing in Superior, the second floor provided rooms for a number of area miners."

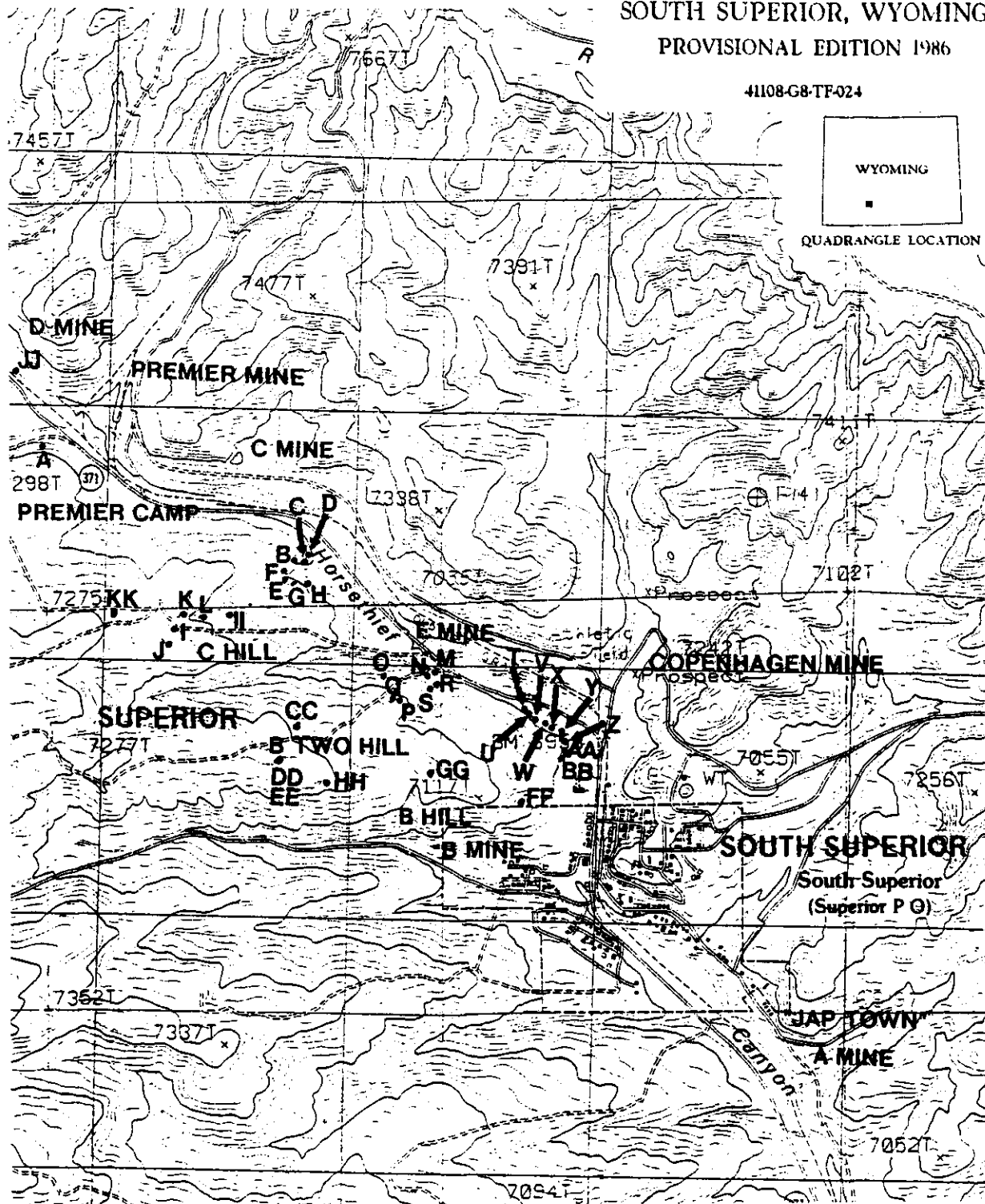
The construction of those various mines and structures created the cultural landscape evident today in Horse Thief Canyon.

III. STRUCTURE DESCRIPTION

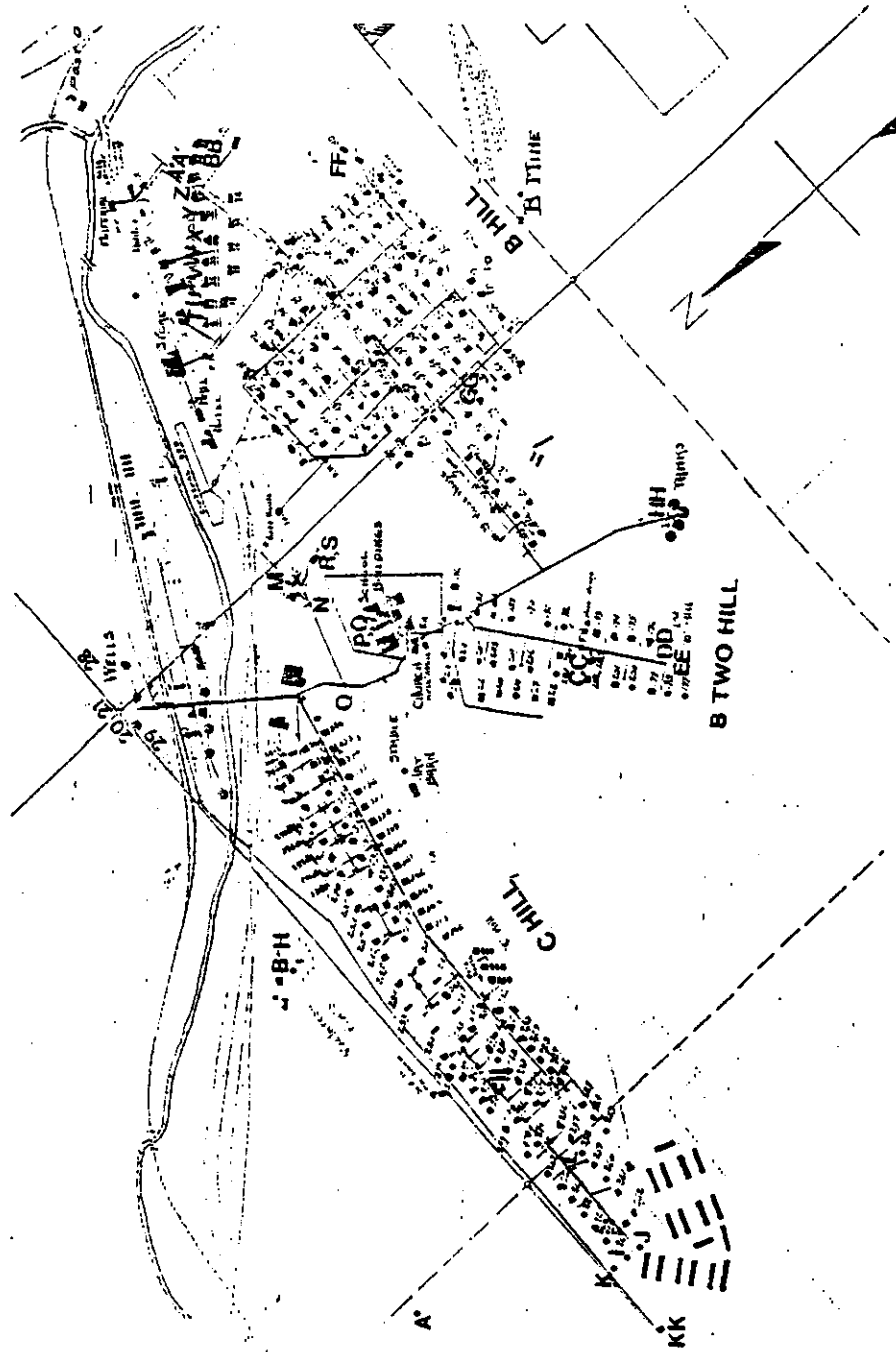
The 37 structures recorded here are related either to the water supply system transportation, habitation, education, or coal mine activity at Superior. The principal features are related to the water system. The houses are either company built houses or vernacular structures. The school and related hospital served the coal town of Superior. The only mine related structure is the dewatering well located in the Horse Thief Creek drainage bottom. This dewatering well is manifested as a well casing. The only transportation feature is a narrow bridge that crossed Horse Thief Creek connecting the D Mine area with houses south of the creek. All of the structures described are interrelated and are part of the Superior cultural landscape.

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Locational map showing structures recorded and their relationship to the town of Superior, Sweetwater County, Wyoming.



A reproduction of a historic map of the Superior Water System dated 1925 and corrected to 1948. The structures described in this document have been labeled on this map. This map was originally drawn by the Union Pacific Coal Company to show the extent of the water system. The original is on file at Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs.

ENDNOTES

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- ⁸ State Coal Mine Inspector, var. Annual Report of the State Coal Mine Inspector, 1897, 1899, 1909-1950, various printers, State of Wyoming, Cheyenne, 1913, p. 12. (Note: In 1928 the name changed to State Inspector of Coal Mines. Two districts existed prior to 1925; therefore, information pertinent to this study is found under District 1 until 1925. State Coal Mine Inspector is abbreviated as S.M.I. in the text.)
- ⁹ Ibid., 1916, p. 14.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 1918, p. 17.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 1920, p. 21.
- ¹² Ibid., 1925, p. 5.
- ¹³ Joseph Bozovich, var. personal communications, Rock Springs, Wyoming. Former employee of the Union Pacific Coal Company, 1983.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 1986.
- ¹⁵ State Coal Mine Inspector, var. Annual Report of the State Coal Mine Inspector, 1897, 1899, 1909-1950. Various printers, State of Wyoming, Cheyenne, 1909, p. 7. (Note: In 1928 the name changed to State Inspector of Coal Mines. Two districts existed prior to 1925; therefore, information pertinent to this study is found under District 1 until 1925. State Coal Mine Inspector is abbreviated as S.M.I. in the text.)

- ¹⁶ Ibid., 1911, p. 12.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 1913, p. 12.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 1916, pp. 14-15.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 1918, pp. 16-18.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p. 18.
- ²¹ Ibid., 1921, p. 21.
- ²² Ibid., 1923, p. 13.
- ²³ Ibid., 1927, p. 12.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 1929, p. 26.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 1931, p. 18.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 1934; 1935, p. 16.
- ²⁷ Anonymous, HUPCM, History of the Union Pacific Coal Company, Colonial Press, Omaha, Nebraska, 1977, p. 140.
- ²⁸ State Coal Mine Inspector, var. Annual Report of the State Coal Mine Inspector, 1897, 1899, 1909-1950. Various printers, State of Wyoming, Cheyenne, 1909, pp. 7-8. (Note: In 1928 the name changed to State Inspector of Coal Mines. Two districts existed prior to 1925; therefore, information pertinent to this study is found under District 1 until 1925. State Coal Mine Inspector is abbreviated as S.M.I. in the text.)
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- ³⁰ Ibid., 1913, p. 12.
- ³¹ Anonymous, HUPCM, History of the Union Pacific Coal Company, Colonial Press, Omaha, Nebraska, 1977, p. 141.
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- ³⁶ Anonymous, HUPCM, History of the Union Pacific Coal Company, Colonial Press, Omaha, Nebraska, 1977, p. 143.
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- ⁴¹ Ibid., 1922, pp. 10, 11.
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- ⁴⁷ Ibid., Book 120, p. 540.
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- ⁴⁹ Ibid., Book N:48-50.
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- ⁴¹ Joseph Bozovich, var. personal communication, Rock Springs, Wyoming. Former employee of the Union Pacific Coal Company, 1986.
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- ⁴³ Mary Knezovich, personal communication, Superior, Wyoming. Premier resident and local amateur historian, 1986; Henry R. Zampedri, personal communication, Rock Springs, Wyoming. Former Superior resident, 1984.
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